

REMARKS

Claims 20-22, 28-37, 39-51, 53-62, and 79 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 22, 28 and 32 are cancelled and claims 29, 30, 31, 33 and 79 are amended.

Claim Objections

In the Office Action mailed November 13, 2008, claim 22 was objected to for identified informalities. As claim 22 has been cancelled as part of the present amendment, said objection has been rendered moot.

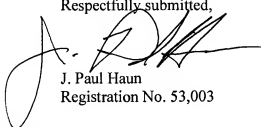
Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

In the Office Action mailed November 13, 2008, claims 22, 28-32 and 79 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,969,888 to Scholten et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,549,679 to Kuslich. Without acquiescing to the Examiner's rejections or reasoning and while expressly preserving the right to pursue claims of similar scope in related cases, Applicants, in order to further prosecution, have elected to cancel claims 22, 28 and 32 and to amend claims 29-31, 33 and 79 to conform to the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter for prior dependent claims 33 and 34. With the present amendment, claim 33 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the former base claims. As such, it is Applicants belief that all of the rejections have been overcome.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Paul Haun', is written over the typed name and registration number.

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